

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL HONG KONG

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, HK

SUBJECT: HONG KONG AND GSP

REF: STATE 056679

1. DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MIKE GLITMAN (EB/ITP) MET WITH HONG KONG COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR ALEC HERMANN ON MARCH 25 AND GAVE HIM STATEMENT ON HONG KONG AND GSP AS SET FORTH IN PARA ONE OF REFTEL. HERMANN WAS TOLD THAT BARRING CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION, WE WOULD EXPECT TO MOVE HONG KONG TO THE A LIST AT THE SAME TIME AS SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. QUESTION OF PRESS HANDLING WAS THEN DISCUSSED ALONG LINES OF PARA THREE OF REFTEL. HERMANN APPEARED PLEASED BY STATEMENT AND SAID HE WOULD COMMUNICATE TO HKG

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CONCERNS ABOUT PRESS HANDLING.

2. DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED CENTERED ON QUESTION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES AND TIMING OF NEXT STEPS. HERMANN SAID THAT HKG WAS PREPARED TO DO WHAT IT HAD TO REGARDING REVERSE PREFERENCES IN ORDER TO OBTAIN BENEFICIARY STATUS. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT BRITISH COLLEAGUES AT THE EMBASSY HAD EXPRESSED HOPE THAT QUESTION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES COULD BE HANDLED IN SUCH A WAY THAT THEY COULD BE RETAINED IN AREAS WHERE US DOES NOT AND WILL NOT HAVE A TRADE

INTEREST. HERMANN USED EXAMPLE OF CARS WITH LESS THAN 1000 CC ENGINES. HE SAID HKG ALSO HAD INTEREST IN SUCH AN APPROACH AS REVERSE PREFERENCES WERE ABOUT THE ONLY THING HONG KONG HAD TO BARGAIN WITH IN UPCOMING TRADE TALKS. GLITMAN TOLD HERMANN THAT THERE WAS AN IDEOLOGICAL AS WELL AS A PRACTICAL ASPECT TO THE QUESTION OF REVERSE PREFERENCES BUT THAT POINT HERMANN RAISED WOULD BE CONSIDERED.

3. GLITMAN SAID INTER-AGENCY DISCUSSIONS OF REVERSE PREFERENCES ISSUES WOULD BE NEEDED AND, FOLLOWING THESE DISCUSSIONS, THE DEPT WOULD BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH HERMANN.

4. HERMANN SAID THAT DEPT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DIRECTOR JORDAN WAS INTERESTED IN VISITING THE US TO DEMONSTRATE HKG INTEREST IN MATTER (HERMANN INDICATED JORDAN WANTED TO ANNOUNCE HIS VISIT AT BUDGET MEETING IN EARLY APRIL). HE SAID THAT JORDAN NOW THINKING OF ARRIVING IN US AROUND APRIL 21 AND SUGGESTED THAT IF REVERSE PREFERENCES ISSUE COULD BE RESOLVED BY THEN, PERHAPS FINAL AGREEMENT COULD BE CONCLUDED DURING JORDAN'S VISIT. GLITMAN SAID HE COULD NOT PROMISE THAT PROCEDURES WOULD BE COMPLETED IN SHORT TIME REMAINING BETWEEN NOW AND PROPOSED APRIL 21 VISIT.
KISSINGER

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